







DEMAND FOR PRISONER RELEASE: Palestinian stage a sit-in demonstration on Monday in front of the Palestinian council in Gaza Strip calling on Israel to release their sons and brothers who are held as political prisoners. Several thousand Palestinians are still held by Israel (Reuters photo)

## Turkish coalition government under fire from angry public

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkey's coalition is expected to weather more corruption votes in parliament later this week but there are early signs that many Turks are losing patience with the troubled eight-month-old government.

The coalition has the muscle, at least on paper, to squeak through parliamentary corruption probes aimed at junior partner Tansu Ciller. Voting is scheduled for Feb. 18 and 19.

Analysts say Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's Islam-based Welfare Party, the biggest and most disciplined faction with 160 deputies, will surely vote as a bloc to protect Mrs. Ciller.

With no more than 269 seats shared among rival opposition parties, only defections from Mrs. Ciller's secularist True Path Party could secure the 276 votes required to pass the motion and send her to the supreme court for trial.

Members of the main opposition Motherland Party are pessimistic about the prospects of splitting Mrs. Ciller's party.

"Deputies may have problems sending their own chairman to the supreme court, so I think it is unrealistic to expect votes from the DYP here," a Motherland member told Reuters.

That same parliamentary calculus should allow Mr. Erbakan to side-step a censure motion, effectively a

vote of no-confidence introduced by two leftist parties, set for Feb. 25.

"Many politicians say the government will fall but no one can explain how," said political analyst Bilal Cetin.

"It is not so easy to topple the government."

However, the opposition is clearly taking heart at a growing civic backlash against the Erbakan-Ciller partnership, fuelled by revulsion at evidence of large-scale corruption, state-sponsored death squads and fears the official secular system is at risk.

At the same time, the coalition allies — always uneasy bedfellows — are at odds over everything from high-level appointments to fiscal policy.

"In the West, we would call this a formula for gridlock," said one foreign diplomat. "It seems they can survive for now, but can they govern?"

In a rare display of public anger, up to 10,000 women took to the streets of the capital Ankara on Saturday to protest against any bid to give Islam a greater role in Turkey's public life.

Left-wing groups also joined the demonstration.

Their immediate target was a series of welfare proposals, including an end to a ban on headscarves among female civil servants. Mr. Erbakan has also planned to build big mosques in secular neighbourhoods and

sponsor overland travel to the Muslim holy city of Mecca.

"We are women, we are strong. We are against Shariah," chanted the protesters. "Join hands for democracy."

Some residents of Istanbul, Ankara and other cities have responded to a campaign for greater openness, switching off their lights for one minute at 9.00 p.m. every night.

A number of clubs, bars and restaurants in Istanbul's Taksim square, a secularist stronghold and once "capital" of the Ottoman Christian community, observed 60 seconds of darkness on Saturday. Hundreds of people gathered around the square with candles, chanting "don't stay silent or the guns will be trained on you" and "human dignity will overcome torture."

Local cinemas have been running a short advertisement before each film asking citizens for "one minute of darkness for enlightenment."

The campaign was launched this year to demand answers in a scandal that has revealed close ties among the security forces, top politicians and ultra-nationalist gangsters.

"This is a good indication that public awareness and sensitivity has been achieved in Turkey," analysts Cetin told Reuters.

"This did not happen in the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s."

## Uday faces amputation — exiles

AMMAN (R) — An Iraqi opposition spokesman said on Monday three Cuban doctors treating Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday in Baghdad have recommended that his left leg be amputated above the knee.

Haroun Mohammad, spokesman for the Amman-based Iraqi National Accord (INA) which says it has sources inside Iraq, said Uday's knee "had been completely smashed" when gunmen attacked him two months ago.

"The doctors suggested amputating from the knee and fitting him with an artificial leg," Mr. Mohammad said. "It seems they are waiting for a decision from Saddam himself."

He said Uday had been treated by Iraqi and French doctors as well as the Cuban team, which, he said, crossed into Iraq from Iran. Reports in Amman have said Jordanian doctors have also travelled to Baghdad to treat Uday, but Mr. Mohammad denied this.

Iraqi television footage of Uday in a wheelchair, moving his head and arms, has failed to allay speculation the man seen as Iraq's most powerful figure after his father has been paralysed.

"It's now been two months since the attack, and he still can't stand up and his hand movements are limited," Mr. Mohammad said.

## Gamaa claims massacre was 'perhaps a mistake'

CAIRO (Agencies) — An outlawed militant group has claimed the church massacre in which nine Coptic Christians were shot dead last week but said it was "perhaps a mistake," the newspaper Al Hayat reported Monday.

A Gamaa Islamiyah official, contacted by the London-based Arabic daily, said "our policy is not to kill Christians wherever they are, nor to attack places of worship, unless plots are being hatched there against Islam."

"Gamaa found out that the people in the church were refusing to abide by the alliance of protection," he said, referring to the rights and obligations of non-Muslim subjects in an Islamic state.

"That's why Gamaa commandos opened fire on them," he said, referring to the Christian religious students shot in the back last Wednesday at a church in the mixed village of Abu Qurqas in southern Egypt.

"It was they (the commandos) who decided to attack the church, and the mistake was perhaps to attack the church," the official told Al Hayat.

He said his group was also responsible for the deaths of three more Copts, including a policeman, whose bodies were found on Friday near Abu Qurqas.

"The Gamaa was convinced they were collaborating with the police," he said.

Egyptian state television on Saturday broadcast photographs of six militants who police said were behind the church massacre, in which five people were also wounded.

Around 110 Copts have been slain since the outbreak of anti-government violence in March 1992

that has now claimed the lives of more than 1,140 people.

### Iraqi newspaper denounces massacre

Iraq on Monday condemned the massacre of Coptic Christians in Egypt, saying the attack was designed to spark another Lebanese-style religious war.

"This crime is aimed at provoking religious conflict in Egypt, like the trouble which tore apart and destroyed Lebanon during the last 20 years," the official Al Thawra newspaper said.

"This incident, as well as what is happening in Algeria, the aggression against Sudan and the plot against Iraq," are part of a larger "American-Zionist plot against the Arab Nation," the daily said.

"This plot is aimed at tearing apart the Arab nation and weakening it," the daily said.

"Zionism and the West harbour a deep hatred of Arab nationalism, and there is a concerted attack led by the Zionist entity, America and Britain against Arab nationalism."

Al Thawra accused the West of encouraging Islamic extremists in order to give Islam a bad name.

"If the governments of Western countries are really against terrorism, why do they allow extremists to open offices in their capitals and permit them to conduct political activities there?" it said.

The daily asked "why no American or British has been killed in Algeria while French people or Russians are killed," and why do militant groups "have the most sophisticated means of communication?"

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Lebanese parliament speaker to visit Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri will visit Kuwait in the first week of March at the invitation of his Kuwaiti counterpart Ahmad Al Sandoun, an official said Monday. Mr. Berri, who leads the pro-Syrian Shiite Muslim party Amal, is expected on March 1 or March 2, although the date has not yet been finalised, said the official at Kuwait's national assembly, or parliament. The visit is to last between three and four days. The national assembly is dominated by Sunni Muslims, although there are five Shiite deputies among the 50 elected seats. Shiites account for between 20 and 30 per cent of Kuwait's 700,000 citizens.

### Philippines lifts ban on Gulf workers

MANILA (AFP) — The Philippines has lifted a ban on sending workers to Bahrain and northern areas of Saudi Arabia near the borders with Kuwait and Iraq because of easing of tensions there, Labour Secretary Leonardo Quinsumbing said Monday. The Labour Department suspended the deployment of workers to the area in September 1996 because of tension sparked by renewed U.S. attacks on Iraq after the 1991 Gulf war.

### Quake hits Iranian port, no damage reported

DUBAI (R) — An earthquake measuring 4.6 on the Richter scale jolted the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas on Monday but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said. The quake shook Bandar Abbas at 8.03 a.m. (0433GMT). "No report is so far available on possible casualties or damage to property," IRNA said. Bandar Abbas, which has 250,000 inhabitants, is a major commercial port on the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance to the Gulf. Iran's eighth oil refinery is due to be ready for operation in Bandar Abbas next month. A force four earthquake is powerful enough to cause heavy damage in a populated area. Clothing with Western symbols set on fire in Iran.

### Clothing with Western symbols set on fire in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Authorities in southeastern Iran have set fire in public to "hundreds" of pieces of clothing bearing Western symbols, notably the American flag, a newspaper reported Monday. Militiamen, known as the Basijis, had seized the clothing from boutiques in the Oman sea port of Kenarak in Sistan-Baluchestan province, Kayhan daily said. It published a picture of many T-shirts bearing the pictures of the American flag, the Statue of Liberty and "other Western symbols" being set on fire in front of a group of people. A Basij commander, Hamid Arvay, told the paper that stores in Kenarak had been ordered not to sell clothing bearing such symbols. Iran seeks to eradicate all signs of the "decadent" Western culture in line with its Islamisation drive. In December, the Iranian parliament banned manufacturers from printing Western inscriptions on their products.

## U.S., S. Africa play down Syrian disagreement

CAPE TOWN (R) — The United States-South Africa binational commission started work on Monday determined to play down disagreements over a proposed South African arms sale to Syria.

U.S. Vice-President Al Gore and South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said in opening the third plenary session they shared enough common values to overcome their differences.

Relations between Pretoria and Washington have been strained by news that South Africa is considering selling tank firing systems to Syria, a plan opposed by Israel and the United States.

"Like any relationship, ours cannot be free of occasional disagreements," Mr. Mbeki said.

"But I believe that because our relationship is based on common ideal, with respect for each other's sovereignty, we are able to resolve those differences cordially."

"And the commission plays an important role in that regard. The areas of agreement between our two nations are so many that we are able to withstand a few areas of disagreement that might arise," Mr. Mbeki said.

Mr. Gore led a high-level delegation, including five cabinet secretaries, for three days of talks to increase cooperation on trade, economics, science, education, health and the environment.

Mr. Gore, who has refused to comment in

public on U.S. opposition to the arms sales to Syria, said the commission marked the continuation of the two countries' "shared voyage to freedom, grace, healing and redemption."

He said the commission's task was broader than forging bilateral links. "To share triumphs and successes and, yes, to disagree and to do so openly, honestly as friends and partners and global neighbours."

Mr. Mbeki and most of the South African cabinet met the U.S. delegation at the historic fort, the Castle.

Mr. Mbeki said the commission already had substantial achievements in promoting trade and investment as well as advancing free

markets, conserving water, protecting the environment, reducing pollution and providing sustainable energy for the poor.

Agreements due to be signed this week include one on double taxation and another on the Fulbright scholarship programme.

"The double taxation agreement will certainly reinforce and spur our already growing investment and trade relations," Mr. Mbeki said.

"We would like to see the number of U.S. companies operating in South Africa increase from the current 700... to 1,400 by the time of the next sessions of the binational commission."

every Sunday  
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES  
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple.....700/500  
Banana.....550/550  
Banana (imported).....980/800  
Cabbage.....80/50  
Carrot.....230/140  
Cauliflower.....300/180  
Cucumber (large).....200/120  
Cucumber (small).....330/180  
Eggplant.....220/140  
Fava beans.....900/700  
Garlic.....1150/950  
Grape fruit.....160/100  
Lemon.....420/320  
Marrow (large).....300/150  
Marrow (small).....460/280  
Onion (green).....200/140  
Onion (dry).....220/130  
Orange.....480/250  
Peas.....900/700  
Pepper (hot).....300/140  
Pepper (sweet).....400/200  
Potato.....350/230  
Radish.....100/80  
Spinach.....230/150  
String beans.....750/500  
Tomato.....240/150

Other Flights  
07:30.....London (RJ)  
07:35.....London (BA)  
14:30.....Kiev (6U)  
15:45.....Munich (YP)  
17:40.....Dubai (EK)  
19:15.....Rome (AZ)  
21:30.....Tel Aviv (LY)  
22:50.....Tel Aviv (LY)  
00:40.....Damascus, Amsterdam (KL)  
01:00.....Aden (FY)  
01:55.....Bucharest (RO)  
07:45.....Beirut (ME)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights  
07:00.....Agaba (RW)  
17:15.....Tel Aviv (RW)  
20:30.....Agaba (RW)  
HIAZ RAILWAY TRAIN  
Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday  
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday  
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m.

FOR THE TRAVELLER  
QUEEN ALIA  
AIRPORT  
ARRIVALS  
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
07:15.....Sana'a (RJ)  
07:25.....Damascus (RJ)  
09:25.....Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
09:30.....Agaba (add) (RJ)  
10:05.....Muscat, Dubai (RJ)  
10:05.....Beirut (RJ)  
10:15.....Doha, Bahrain (RJ)  
15:55.....London (RJ)  
16:20.....Cairo (RJ)  
16:35.....Frankfurt (RJ)  
17:15.....Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)  
Other Flights  
05:05.....London (KJ)  
13:30.....Kiev (6U)  
14:05.....Munich (YP)  
16:30.....Rome (AZ)  
18:15.....Dubai, Damascus (EK)  
20:10.....Beirut (ME)  
20:30.....Cairo (MS)  
21:40.....Tel Aviv (LY)  
23:40.....Amsterdam (KL)  
23:59.....Aden (FY)  
00:55.....Bucharest (RO)  
Royal Wings (RW) Flights  
17:45.....Tel Aviv (RW)  
DEPARTURES  
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
06:20.....Beirut (RJ)  
08:30.....Amsterdam, New York (RJ)  
11:15.....Vienna, Brussels (RJ)  
12:00.....Geneva, Madrid (RJ)  
12:10.....Paris (RJ)

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Akileh Maternity.....64241/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity.....642362  
Mafhas, J. Amman.....636140  
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Amal Hospital.....674155  
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### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

14:08 Cartoon — Budgie-The Little Helicopter

14:30.....Plintstones

15:00.....French Programme

16:00.....Super Spon Folies

16:30.....Dog House

17:00.....News Flash

17:02.....Fun With Physics

17:15.....Album Show







## Slavonia Serbs seek Croatian papers

Klueng in Umphang district, where some 9,000 refugees have gathered, both new arrivals and those who have abandoned camps

shabby suit, applied to be reunited with his Croat wife who evacuated her Croat mother to Zagreb during the 1991 war and was unable to

governments. Mr. C. said "We want to convert them; don't take us granted. We are not a lot of electors."

pend on the support Congress is sure to



# World News

### Slavonians Serbs set Croatian papers

VIENNA, Austria — Slavonians, a minority group in Croatia, are demanding that the government return to them the papers of their ancestors who fled the country during the war. The Slavonians, who number about 100,000, were expelled from their homes in Slavonia, a region in eastern Croatia, after the war ended in 1995. They claim that the government has not yet returned the papers of their ancestors, which they need to prove their right to return to their homes. The Slavonians are demanding that the government return the papers of their ancestors who fled the country during the war. They claim that the government has not yet returned the papers of their ancestors, which they need to prove their right to return to their homes.



Explosive-sniffing dogs help South Korean police search for possible bombs in the luggage of passengers at Seoul's Gimpo Airport Monday. South Korea has been hit by attacks by North Korea following the shooting of North Korean defector Li Il-Nam. Mr. Li, a prominent defector who is the nephew of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il's ex-wife, was shot Saturday night near his apartment. Government officials have described the shooting as an assassination attempt by North Korean infiltrators (Reuters photo)

## India's defence budget flags behind China and Pakistan

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Indian experts said Monday the country's defence budget was inadequate and lagged behind neighbours China and Pakistan, the Press Trust of India reported.

"Given our defence requirements, the allocation does not even meet 75 per cent of the total demand," said Major-General D. Banerjee, co-director of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies.

The Indian government hiked defence spending by \$270 million to \$7.94 billion last July, one of the largest increases in decades. Experts said New Delhi spent 2.39 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) on defence in the current fiscal year to March, compared to 6.88 by Pakistan and 5.63 by China.

They said the acquisition of U.S. F-16 fighter jets by arch-foe Pakistan and reported military aid from China along its southern border with India could undermine national security.

India has fought three wars with Pakistan and a brief but bitter border clash with China in 1962. Gen. Banerjee said the budget would be further strained by a \$1.8 billion deal with Russia to buy 40 Sukhoi-30s. Eight jets will arrive by March while the others will be delivered by 2001.

The Defence Ministry was also critical in a report last year, saying: "Given India's security concerns, the outlay on defence, assessed as a percentage of the total central government expenditure or of the gross domestic product, continues to be the lowest among our neighbouring countries."

Jaswant Singh, a former defence minister and a retired colonel, had also slammed the budget.

"Defence preparedness is not a stop-go mechanism," he said. Annual spending on India's million-plus army, one of the world's largest, was increased by only \$4.1 million to \$3.8 billion in fiscal 1996-97. The budget for the current financial year is due at the end of the month.

Meanwhile, ousted Pakistani Premier Benazir Bhutto said Monday that Pakistan would find a matching response this year to the nuclear-capable Prithvi missile acquired by its arch-rival India.

In a speech to the new parliament, she did not specify whether she meant that Pakistan would develop its own missile saying only "Pakistan will give its response to Prithvi this year."

This would neutralise the danger posed by India's development and deployment of the medium range missile, she told the parliament.

She was speaking as opposition leader after the lower house overwhelmingly endorsed Nawaz Sharif as prime minister for a five year term.

Pakistan has consistently complained of perceived threats to its security from India's missile programme while denying Western charges that it had acquired M-11 missiles from China.

Ms. Bhutto did not specifically say if Pakistani experts were developing their own missile to counter the threat from India.

Pakistan, and India, have fought three wars since 1947, mainly over the lingering dispute about Kashmir.

Neither country are signatories to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty and a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and both are believed capable of speedily assembling nuclear bombs.

Pakistan in the past had said its imports from China did not violate the international Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Reports from Washington last year alleged that Pakistan imported M-11 missiles from China but both Islamabad and Beijing denied the claim.

## Germany, U.S. united on NATO enlargement, Relations with Russia

BONN (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said Friday that Washington and Bonn were fully united on the need to work for NATO enlargement and a charter of relations between NATO and Russia.

Mrs. Albright said they agreed on NATO adaptation, NATO enlargement and the need for strong relations with Russia, Ukraine and the Baltic states, and were working together to make the enlargement process a success.

Referring to the NATO summit in early July when the 16 allies plan to invite East European countries to negotiate membership, she said: "We are all on the road to Madrid."

Speaking at a joint news conference with her German counterpart, Mrs. Albright eluded the question of a five-power NATO mini-summit as proposed by France for April.

Asked about the French mini-summit proposal, which has already run into objection from Italy, the first stop on her nine-nation tour, the U.S. secretary of state said: "We are now focussing very much on the substance of the NATO-Russian charter and the enlargement of NATO."

"It's the substance that interests us, not the process."

Mrs. Albright and Mr. Kinkel were speaking after she met with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the German foreign minister in Bonn Monday morning.

She described Germany as "a valued and very warm ally to the United States and absolutely key to Europe's future."

Mr. Kinkel said they agreed they wanted a dialogue with Russia but that Moscow could not veto NATO enlargement, that they wanted a NATO-Russia charter and a calendar for enlargement.

He also said "everything must be done to facilitate the acceptance" of NATO enlargement by Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

The German minister noted he was going Tuesday to Moscow for talks with his Russian counterpart Yevgeny Primakov and that Mrs. Albright would follow three days later.

The German foreign minister stressed the importance of working out a strategy toward those countries not in the first phase of NATO or European Union enlargement in order to keep the way open for them.

## Congress support of Indian coalition to be 'issue-based'

NEW DELHI (R) — India's Congress Party has sent a frosty warning to Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda ahead of a budget meeting of parliament, telling his centre-left government not to take its crucial support for granted.

The Congress Working Committee (CWC), the party's main policymaking body, issued a statement late Sunday accusing the United Front (UF) minority coalition of taking steps that were not in the interests of the people.

"The CWC resolves that Congress support to UF henceforth would be based on issues and not unconditional," it said.

The strongly worded statement, issued nine months after Deve Gowda took power, revived the spectre of mid-term elections.

"Now there is a shift and change," Congress spokesman Vithal Gadgil said. "They (United Front) cannot take us for granted. From now on our support will be issue-based."

Asked if Congress planned to pull down the government, Mr. Gadgil said: "We want to co-operate with them, don't take us for granted. We are not afraid of elections."

Deve Gowda's 13-party centre-left coalition depends on the support of Congress to survive in parliament against the right-wing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The United Front Coalition, which took power in June following inconclusive general elections, controls 178 votes in the 545-seat lower house of parliament, or Lok Sabha.

It needs the 142 votes held by Congress and its allies to muster a majority. The BJP and its allies have 194 votes, also short of a majority but the biggest contingent in parliament.

All India Radio called the Congress warning a "major shift." The Times of India said it was interpreted as "Congress's first step towards withdrawing support to the Deve Gowda government."

But the United Front shrugged off the threat.

"The government is absolutely confident," a senior United Front leader who asked not to be named told Reuters. "Congress is uncomfortable in this government. It is surviving with their support. They are in no position to go to the polls."

Until Sunday's five-hour meeting of its policymaking body, Congress had extended unconditional support to Mr. Deve Gowda.

But tensions between the government and Congress have mounted since Sitaram Kesri took charge of the party, in September after

## Seoul, U.S. warn N. Korea to back off over defection case

BEIJING (AFP) — South Korea and the United States Monday warned North Korea to avoid provoking trouble as Pyongyang's most senior defector spent his sixth day held up inside the Seoul embassy here.

China also appeared to have acted to prevent escalating provocations by asking dozens of North Koreans posted outside the embassy in central Beijing beyond a heavy security cordon to leave the area.

Around noon all North Korean diplomatic cars and personnel disappeared from the four roadways where they have maintained a continual vigil since top ideologue Hwang Jang-Yop and his aide sought asylum Wednesday, an AFP journalist said.

Armed Chinese police manning roadblocks said the departure was due to foreign affairs issues, but refused to make further comments.

However, the new whereabouts of the North Koreans and their diplomatic cars was unclear as they did not return to the North Korean embassy, some three kilometres south of the security cordon.

Their removal came after Bill Richardson, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, warned North Korea to refrain from all provocative actions in the tense standoff, which has already resulted in the shooting of another North Korean defector in Seoul and threat of violence from the watchers in Beijing.

"We urge North Korea to live up to the agreement that they made on the submarine incident, when they apologised, and part of that agreement with South Korea was, number one, that they not engage in provocative actions," he told ABC Television.

The submarine incident provoked the previous major tension between rivals North and South Korea after a North Korean submarine carrying armed commandos ran aground in September 1996 in South Korean waters.

Seoul's mission in Beijing echoed the call for an end to all provocative measures and said it was very worried by the continual harassment of embassy personnel and other members of the 50,000 strong South Korean community in Beijing.

"We are extremely concerned by their aggressive behaviour," embassy spokesman Chung Moon-ik told AFP.

"They constantly harass our staff and even chase us in their cars when we go home," Mr. Chung said, adding many embassy personnel were fearful of possible physical attack.

South Korean embassy cars — easily identified by their number plates — are usually tailed by the North Koreans as soon as they leave any of their three embassy compounds in Beijing.

In a precautionary measure, the South Korean kindergarten in Beijing — due to reopen last Thursday — remains closed and South Koreans throughout the city have been warned not to venture out alone.

China, which is trapped between its cold war ally in the North and its new-age trading partner in the South, has repeatedly called for calm.

It has already dispatched riot police backed up by a water cannon to guard the South Korean consular section, alongside roadblocks fashioned out of police vehicles and road spikes.

But North Korea maintains that Mr. Hwang — Pyongyang's top ideologue and the highest-ranking official to defect since the end of the Korean War in 1953 — was abducted by South Korea and has threatened retaliation unless China helps recover him.

Mr. Chung said the impasse was under negotiation with Chinese officials, but his superior in Seoul, Ryu Kwang-Suk, the chief of the Foreign Ministry's Asia-Pacific Bureau, denied any Chinese officials had met with Mr. Hwang or even requested a meeting.

"It is totally unfounded that Secretary Hwang Jang-Yop was met by (Chinese) Vice Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxian or CIA officials," Mr. Ryu said.

## 150 held as violence sweeps eastern Germany

BERLIN (AFP) — More than 150 people were detained over the weekend to violence involving neo-Nazis, leftwing militants, punks and police in several towns across eastern Germany, police said Sunday.

In Berlin, 104 people were arrested Saturday after violent clashes between rightwing extremists and leftwing militants, police there said Sunday.

Several people were injured in the fighting, which erupted when about 500 demonstrators gathered to protest a rally by the extreme-right NPD Youth Party calling for "jobs for Germans first."

About 600 policemen backed by water-cannons intervened when 350 of the demonstrators stormed a tram-stop in the Hellersdorf district in pursuit of a group of skinheads.

The original number of arrests given by police Saturday had been 26.

In Magdeburg, two people were injured in the early hours of Saturday in a skirmish between neo-Nazi youths and punks. Two neo-Nazis were detained.

On Sunday, 22 youths some armed with clubs and truncheons and described by police as leftwing extremists, were arrested and placed in custody.

The punks accused the neo-Nazis of being responsible for the death of Frank Boettcher, a punk murdered a week before in the eastern city. A demonstration by the extreme right, due to have been held Sunday, was banned by the authorities and 370 supporters heading for the rally were turned back.

In Brandenburg, 350 young people clashed with police after holding a rally to protest neo-Nazi violence and the murder of a punk by a skinhead a year ago. Police said they arrested five people.

In Dessau, a bus carrying supporters of the extreme right DVU Party was besieged by a crowd of anti-Nazi activists and covered with paint. Police said they arrested 37 people. A person uninvolved in the clash was injured.

Meanwhile, about 250 skinheads shouting Nazi slogans and giving the Nazi salute, ransacked a restaurant Saturday at Nieder-Seifersdorf after the authorities banned a concert. Four of them were arrested.

At Guben, police dispersed about 40 neo-Nazis Friday night. Seventeen of them were found to be carrying weapons and banned Nazi propaganda.

Employment and immigration in Germany have become sensitive issues, particularly for youth groups which see job opportunities cut to their lowest level since 1933 — the year Adolf Hitler came to power amid political and social turmoil.

## Zaire denies rearming of Rwandan Hutu soldiers

KINSHASA (Agencies) — Zaire's Defence Ministry Monday denied claims that the government was rearming troops of the former Rwandan army at a refugee camp in the east of the country.

In a statement, the ministry added that the Zairean Armed Forces were determined to pursue their counter-offensive against a "coalition of rebels and regular troops from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, with the aim of reconquering occupied territory and pacifying the country."

Laurent-Désiré Kabila's rebel alliance, which launched its uprising in October in eastern Zaire, recently accused the authorities of rearming exiled soldiers of Rwanda's former Hutu army in the Tingi-Tingi refugee camp to fight alongside regular Zairean forces.

The mainly Tutsi rebels also threatened to attack Tingi-Tingi, which is home to some 150,000 refugees, because of the alleged rearming. The camp is the only remaining one for Rwandan Hutu refugees in upper Zaire.

At the weekend, rebel-controlled Radio Bukavu reported increased fighting around the Tingi-Tingi camp, which shelters 150,000 Rwandan Hutus east of Kisangani, describing it as a "hotbed" of extremist Hutu militias and former Rwandan soldiers.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan called Friday for a halt to militarisation of the Tingi-Tingi camp, "which puts in danger the lives of innocent refugees and humanitarian workers."

The rebels say they control around 20 per cent of this huge Central African country with 15,000 men under arms and non-Tutsi recruits joining daily.

More than a million Rwandan Hutus fled to Zaire during and after the ethnic civil war that wracked their neighbouring country in 1994, before a Tutsi rebel front seized power in Kigali.

Most of the refugees returned to Rwanda late last year.

Meanwhile, a second camp for Rwandan Hutu refugees was opened Monday in eastern Zaire, officials of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in Kisangani.

The Kalima site, about 100 kilometres east of the town of Kindu, will initially take in 25,000 people who evacuated their camp at Shabunda at the start of the month, when Zairean rebels arrived in the area.

Some 40,000 people in all fled when they heard that guerrillas were advancing, according to the UNHCR.

The governor in Kindu gave permission for the new camp to be opened after authorities originally turned the project down and the charity Caritas is setting up kitchens to feed incoming refugees.

UNHCR staff said the presence of an airport and a good road in Kalima would enable aid workers to provide regular supplies should the camp remain open for a long time. A railway line links Kindu with Zambia and South Africa and the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) was said Monday to be organising deliveries by train.

Negotiations are under way between the UNHCR and Mr. Kabila to bring about the rapid repatriation of the Hutu refugees to neighbouring Rwanda, informed sources said here.

Rwandans emerging from the forest to go to Kamila are in precarious health, but most received food just before leaving Shabunda and have held out to date.

UNHCR officials said.

The only other camp in the region is at Tingi-Tingi.

Some 17,000 refugees from another camp at Amisi have been grouped near Tingi-Tingi after they were evacuated following the advance of the rebels.

Zairean authorities and refugees' representatives want another camp set up for these people, but aid organisations in the region argue that the camp already there can take them in.

Amisi was officially said to be home to some 40,000 refugees, but humanitarian sources have stated that this figure is grossly exaggerated.

At the beginning of February, relief organisations estimated that some 200,000 Rwandan Hutus remained in eastern Zaire.

More than a million Rwandans fled their neighbouring country during and after the civil war there of 1994, when Hutu militias and troops were routed by Tutsi rebels after the genocide of more than half a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus by Hutu extremists.

## U.S. shuttle crew make fourth spacewalk

JOHNSON SPACE CENTRE, Texas (R) — Spacewalking astronauts worked on the Hubble space telescope for a fourth night Monday as NASA engineers hurried to finalise plans to patch up the telescope's peeling, sunburned skin.

Astronauts Greg Burch and Joe Tanner began the fourth spacewalk of the mission at 10:50 p.m. est Sunday (0350 GMT Monday), while on Discovery's middeck pilot Scott Horowitz prepared to fabricate makeshift sunshields for the telescope's damaged insulation.

NASA officials Sunday added an extra spacewalk to make repair to the reflective silvery foil. There were concerns that crucial electronic components could overheat if nothing was done before the shuttle's next servicing call.

Engineers suspected that the cracks and rips in the material were caused by harsh ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

Harbaugh and Tanner were to patch-up two long tears in the foil during a six-hour spacewalk, but first they were to complete their planned servicing tasks.

They successfully installed a European-built electronic device to control the observatory's solar arrays and then headed up the telescope to install covers on two magnetic sensors.

While the astronauts worked overhead, engineers on the ground hurried to finalise plans to construct makeshift patches to cover four torn and tattered areas on Hubble's sun-facing side.

With limited supplies aboard the shuttle, Horowitz was cautioned not to start the work until engineers were sure they had thought of everything.

"We are using up absolutely everything we have and if we get something cut the wrong length then we will have done a bad thing," astronaut Jeff Hoffman warned from mission control.

Ground controllers faxed the crew five pages of instructions and 14 diagrams to show them how to build sunshields from spare insulating foil, electrical wire, ropes, cords, alligator clips and wrap ties, using scissors, wire cutter, crimp tools and sticky tape.

"We expect the middeck to look as neat as your garage," Hoffman joked.

Discovery crewmen Mark Lee and Steve Smith were due to make an unscheduled three or four-hour outing into the space Monday night to complete repairs to the telescope's foil insulation.



## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation  
Established 1975  
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية المستقلة

Chairman of the Board of Directors:  
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:  
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Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

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Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.  
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the  
Jordan Times advertising department.

## Unacceptable interpretation

MINISTER OF Information Marwan Muasher's confirmation that Israel may no longer consider Jordanians as "absentee property owners" puts us on a collision course with the Jewish state on an issue that is literally worth billions of dollars. The Israeli embassy in Amman claims that real estate belonging to Jordanian citizens who hail from 1948 Palestine will continue to be regarded as "absentee property" under the 1950 Israeli absentee property law. An embassy statement on the issue contended that the status of individual properties in Israel belonging to Jordanians will "neither be modified nor even discussed in the final phase of the Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty."

What is even more striking is the embassy's assertion that "in the framework of the peace treaty between the two countries, it has been agreed that there will be no change in the current status of absentee properties." This particular Israeli contention is so serious it warrants an unequivocal statement from the government over and above the assurances of the minister of information. The government is obliged to tell its citizens whether in fact the Kingdom agreed to allow properties in Israel belonging to Jordanians to be treated as "absentee properties." There is no escaping the conclusion that what the Israeli embassy is now telling us is diametrically opposed to our understanding of the terms of the treaty.

The Israeli assertion that the peace treaty did not have a retroactive effect is repugnant to the spirit of the peace accord. If Jordan were to accept Israel's thesis, then the Kingdom would have been absolved from taking the legislative and administrative measures that led to abolishing anti-Israeli laws after the treaty went into effect.

We believe that Article 26 of the peace treaty commits Israel to repeal any legislation that is inconsistent with the treaty. That Israel has another interpretation calls for the strongest reaction. A loud and clear response from the government on this pressing issue is imperative. The "absentee property committee" established by the previous government in 1995 should also be convened to discuss this subject. That imposing Israel's own interpretation of the peace treaty on its peace partner is unacceptable.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

REPORTS THAT the Palestinians and the Israelis have created special committees to tackle the outstanding issues between the two sides and carry out the second stage of the Israeli redeployment in the Arab territories were warmly welcomed by Al Ra'i daily Monday. We are optimistic that the negotiations which will involve these committees' work in the coming month will achieve good results and hope that the end of the present century will witness the end of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, said the paper. But, the paper said, the negotiations on the final status concerning Jerusalem, the refugees and the Jewish settlements on Arab lands should be based on the principles and carried out in the spirit of the U.N. Security Council resolutions that call for the exchange of land for peace. It said that the Israelis can pave the ground for a lasting peace by refraining from building more settlements, by stopping the process of confiscating the identity cards of Arab citizens of Jerusalem and by responding to Palestinian demands to release prisoners. Should the Israelis prove to be genuinely committed to achieving a just peace with the Palestinians, said the paper, the way for establishing peace along the Israeli-Arab tracks will be paved and the prospect of a comprehensive peace in the region will become closer than ever.

A WRITER for the weekly Al Majd criticised journalists and other voices that call for a halt to all forms of resistance against the Israelis in the occupied lands of Palestine and Lebanon and said the Israeli occupation forces understand only the language of resistance and force. Bahjat Abu Ghuribeh said it is the right of all oppressed people and occupied nations to rise against the oppressors and occupiers and force them out of their lands. It was the resistance of the Vietnamese against the French and American colonial forces that secured freedom for Vietnam, and it was the resistance that forced the Americans to leave Beirut, the writer noted. Referring to the situation in Palestine, the writer said that the stiff resistance to Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip had prompted Israeli government leaders to declare their desire to quit the Gaza Strip, and it was the rebellion of the young people armed with rocks and stones that forced Israel to enter into negotiations with the Palestinians and withdraw from parts of Palestine. But such resistance, he said, should continue to end the occupation of the rest of Palestine. With reference to Lebanon, the writer said that the heavy losses of lives, inflicted on the Israelis by Hizbollah resistance group, and the helicopter crash have prompted Israeli leaders, including members of the Likud Party, to call for a unilateral withdrawal from the Lebanese territory. He said voices advocating a halt to resistance activity should remember that Arab rights cannot be restored without sacrifice.

## The View from Fourth Circle

## Some refreshing news on the condition of the Arab Nation

THOSE OF us who believe that the Arab region, like the European, North American and South-East Asian regions are compelled by geography and culture to work towards closer economic integration will be pleased to hear some refreshing good news from the annual economic report card for the Arab World. I refer to the 1996 Unified Arab Economic Report that is published annually by four pan-Arab organisations, the Arab Monetary Fund, the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, the League of Arab States, and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

My annual browse through this latest report, which covers 1995 and 1994 statistics, reveals several positive changes in the overall macroeconomic condition and direction of the Arab economy, along with some continuing worrying trends. Economists more versed than I in statistical issues will no doubt explain to us why these macroeconomic, aggregate figures for the entire Arab World may have little practical meaning for individual states; nevertheless, I believe that this annual exercise is useful because it helps us monitor the broad condition and trends of the entire Arab region, which ultimately will determine the fate of individual states within that region. The statistics indicate the following in terms of the performance during the past year and comparisons with the Arab condition in the previous two decades:

— Total Arab population reached 253 million in 1995, representing a 2.6 per cent increase since 1994 and a 53 per cent increase since 1980. Total Arab gross domestic product (GDP) increased at a six per cent rate in 1995, to reach \$529 billion, representing a 21 per cent increase over 1980. Since GDP increased faster than the population growth, per capita GDP increased slightly, from \$2,036 to \$2,091. However, these figures are in current prices, and are much less impressive when calculated in real terms that account for inflation and thus reflect real purchasing power of people's income. In the period 1980-1995, per capita income in the Arab World still shows a 20 per cent decline in current terms, from \$2,612 to \$2,091.

— The food gap in the Arab region dropped slightly dur-

ing 1994, from \$10.4 billion to \$9.4 billion, while gross Arab food imports remained high at \$23.4 billion and net food imports at \$17.7 billion. Total Arab foreign trade trends remain relatively consistent, with exports increasing from \$130b to \$143b and imports increasing from \$118b to \$125b, leaving a trade surplus of \$18b in 1995, compared to \$12b the previous year.

— Arab oil income increased by some \$10 billion, to \$97.8b in 1995, reflecting steady production of 18.4 million barrels per day and exports of 16 million barrels per day, but an increase in the average spot oil price from \$15.54 to \$16.86 per barrel.

— The best news is in the public finance department, where the severe distortions of modern Arab statehood and oilhood appear to be slowly giving way to more sustainable and rational behaviour. Total Arab public revenues increased in 1995 from \$126b to \$135b, and held steady at around 30 per cent of GDP. Public expenditures declined nominally from \$158b to \$157b and as a percentage of GDP they declined for the fourth year in a row, from 38 per cent to 35 per cent in the past year, but from 48 per cent to 35 per cent in the past five years. Though this decline will clearly hurt the poor and middle classes, who will suffer worse access to basic services and employment, in the longer term, the declining ratio of public spending to GDP is both healthy and normal — two qualities that have been rather rare in Arab public finance and political economy in recent decades.

— A closer analysis of public spending shows that defence and security expenditures remain rather high, having dropped by about one per cent, to 26 per cent, in 1995, though the longer term trend suggests a slow but steady reduction in the percentage of public spending on the military. Expenditures on social services and development are only slightly lower, at 24 per cent, and seem to be holding steady at that level over the longer term.

— The foreign debt picture remains difficult in the Arab World, with total foreign debt having risen in 1994 from \$144b to \$156b. The total debt service paid by Arab states (principal and interest) declined in 1995 from \$16b to

\$12.6b (though the interest payments increased from \$4.7b to \$4.9b). Debt service as a percentage of export revenues dropped from 31 per cent to 24 per cent in 1994. Official Arab reserves (excluding gold) increased from \$53b to \$60b in 1995, and thus the Arab World's reserves covered 5.5 months of imports, compared to five months the previous year.

— The total budget deficits of the Arab states declined sharply in 1995, from \$32b to \$21b, and the budget deficit as a percentage of GDP dropped from 7.6 per cent to 4.7 per cent — a rather remarkable one-year improvement explained mainly by the harsh and swift economic adjustment policies being implemented by all Arab states. The 4.7 per cent of GDP combined Arab budget deficit compares to an average of over 10 per cent a decade ago, and represents one of the most promising signs of economic rationality on the Arab horizon.

— Further analysis of public finances shows that the Arab states are continuing to raise relatively more revenues by taxing their own people — always a good sign of rational and sustainable statehood and of government legitimacy and durability. Oil continues to account for a high 58 per cent of total government revenues in the Arab World, but tax revenues increased by two percentage points, to 30.2 per cent of revenues in 1995 (from an average of 24 per cent in the early 1990s). Taxes on profits and income, though, remain relatively small, accounting for 8.1 per cent of all revenues in 1995; this is slightly down from 8.8 per cent in 1994, but higher than the 7 per cent average of the early 1990s, and apparently moving in the right direction.

These statistical highlights point out some continuing problems and distortions in the Arab economy, but also some refreshing shifts that promise to reduce our legacy of heavy dependence on governments and increase the dynamism and productivity of private enterprise. The four Arab institutions that produce this report are to be thanked as always for their diligent work and for their continued faith in the integrity and meaning of a collective Arab identity and economy.

## 'For peace to be durable, Syria should be part of the settlement'

By Abba Eban

The writer is a former foreign minister. The following article is reprinted from The Jerusalem Post.

ITAMAR RABINOVITCH's book "The Road Not Taken" portrays me as urging Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett to negotiate with the Syrian dictator Husein Zaim back in 1949! Those who say history cannot be changed have never read an elder statesman's memoirs.

The relevance of this snippet from a distant past is simply that I have never believed peace in the Middle East to be durable unless Syria is part of the settlement.

It is true that Syria at that time "only" wanted half of Lake Kinneret, but I was confident that Ben-Gurion would know how to say no with maximal resonance.

The principle of never refusing negotiation should have prevailed then; it should prevail now over the obstacles that make success a dubious prospect. History has come full circle, and the central role of Syria as the real bridge of the 21st century has penetrated our governmental bulwarks.

When Yitzhak Rabin decreed that the future of the Golan would be determined in a plebiscite, he was never allowed to phrase the question.

If the question were:

"Would you like to renounce the Golan?" there would be a resounding negative. But if it were: "Is a peace treaty with Syria vital to the Israeli national interest, or not?" a positive response would be assured. This illustrates the inherent futility of public opinion polls.

Until recently the Netanyahu administration was saying that the Golan is not even a subject on the agenda. It is all ours, and that's it. Period.

In diplomacy you can't have everything.

*"Desirable ends are not always compatible with each other. Courage cannot always be reconciled with prudence, liberty with equality, sovereignty with concern for human rights, precise planning with the free flow of imagination. That is why the diplomat is the bearer of a view of the outside world which his fellow citizens cannot always follow or accept."*

Desirable ends are not always compatible with each other. Courage cannot always be reconciled with prudence, liberty with equality, sovereignty with concern for human rights, precise planning with the free flow of imagination.

That is why the diplomat is the bearer of a view of the outside world which his fellow citizens cannot always follow or accept.

The task of the peacemaker demands the intellectual gift of seeing all around a problem and estimating all the elements in their relative proportions. It involves taking long views and working for distant ends.

If you ask what good such attitudes are for domestic political advantage, the answer is: no good at all. Israeli rule over the whole of the Golan region and a peace agreement with Syria are two things that most Israelis want. But if our government is worthy of its vocation, it must tell us

supervision are probably available now. They may not be available a year from now.

Netanyahu's qualities will be judged according to his ability to manoeuvre within the range of feasibility. This is a very far cry from the original Likud positions, such as leaving the Golan in Israel's exclusive hands, and pretending that we can satisfy Damascus with water and security.

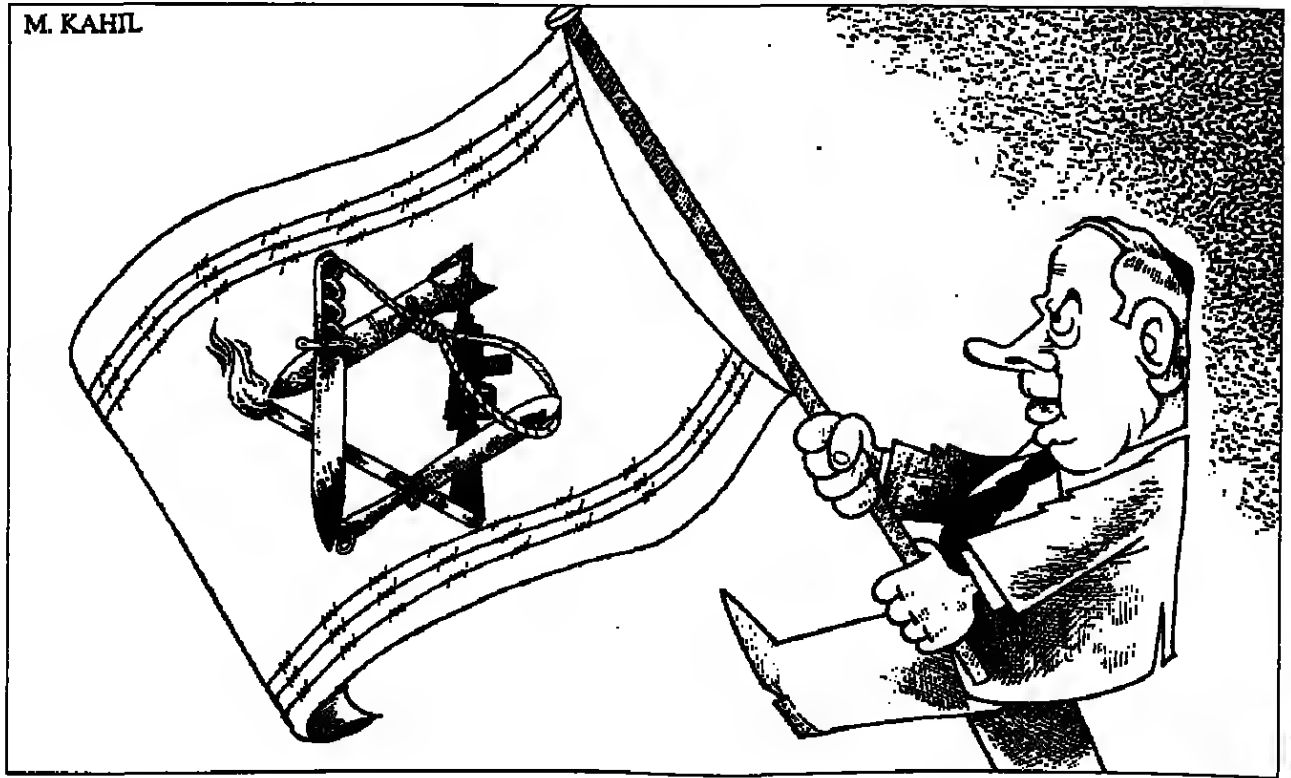
If we are in quest of a stabilising agreement, the worst thing is to talk of unilateral withdrawals or to hint the promises of Hizbollah or Hamas in fictitious terms. The notion that these adversaries would approach our frontiers and recoil from further incursions goes beyond anything that they have said, let alone anything they have ever done.

The times demand realism. I doubt that France, having renounced Algeria, is looking around for non-European engagement in active peacekeeping roles, or that an international peace force in southern Lebanon would be any easier to establish than it was in the Balkans.

It is more likely that stability will depend on Syrian and Israeli decision alone.

The first law of negotiation is "Don't take positions from which you cannot retreat without losing face — or from which you cannot advance without perilous risk."

M. KAHIL



## LETTERS

## 'Null and void'

To the Editor:

I REFER to the letter "Breaching links" (Jordan Times, Feb. 16, 1997), by Omar Nabulsi, the legal representative and counsel to Jordan Mobile Telephone Services (JMTS) "Fastlink" concerning the intent of the government to introduce competition into the cellular telephone market by issuing two new cellular telephone licences.

As minister of post and telecommunications I would like to respond to Mr. Nabulsi's reference to Article 2 of the Licence Agreement between the TCC and JMTS. Article 1.2.1 of the Request for Tenders document states that: "During the exclusivity period no additional cellular licences will be issued, after that the TCC may consider granting additional licences for cellular telephony." However, Mr. Nabulsi only mentioned Article 2 of the Licence Agreement in passing; thus, failing to mention that according to Article 2, the Licence Agreement prevails over all other documents deemed to form the agreement between both parties, which includes the Request for Tenders that Mr. Nabulsi so dearly loves to quote.

In turn, I quote Article 3.b from the Licence Agreement which states: "Nothing in this agreement may be interpreted or construed as waiving the right of the First Party to award other operators similar rights. However, the first party undertakes to maintain the right of exclusivity of operation to the second party during the first four years of the validity of this agreement." The "issue" of a licence does not imply "operation" during the exclusivity (monopoly) period. Therefore, according to the Licence Agreement, the government is well within its legal rights to issue new licences for cellular telephony. Furthermore, the government's drive to introduce competition in the cellular telephony market is consistent with the well-known economic principle that competition encourages investment, enhances customer satisfaction and improves quality.

In light of the above, I believe that all the claims made by Mr. Nabulsi in his letter are rendered null and void.

Jamal Al Sarayrah,  
Minister of Post and Telecommunications.

## More details online

To the Editor:

THIS LETTER is just a note of thanks for your efforts that make my life, and I am sure that of many other Jordanians, easier as I stay in touch with the news back home while I am studying in the United States.

Recently, for the first time, I noticed that Jordan Times, a newspaper that I read regularly in Jordan, was online. I am pleased to inform you that this online service is as interesting as it is informative to those who are interested in the news from Jordan or world news from a Jordanian stand point.

There is, however, one thing that bothers me: why not extend this service so that it covers the entire newspaper, rather than just have the headlines online? Personally, I like to read everything, as the news items are just as interesting, if not more, as the headlines.

Keep up the good work.

Raddad Ayoub,  
SE310 Wiley Hall Box 852,  
West Lafayette,  
Indiana, ZIP 47906  
U.S.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.







# Trade between Jordan and Israel totalled \$18 million last year

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian-Israeli trade amounted to more than \$18 million in 1996 and Israel expects the figure to grow significantly this year following the easing of transport procedures between the countries, an Israeli embassy spokesman said Monday.

Shalom Tourgeman, the spokesman, also said an improvement in political relations between the two countries would be another factor in furthering economic ties.

According to statistics provided by the Israeli embassy, Israeli goods worth \$12.25 million entered Jordan during 1996 while the flow in the opposite direction was worth \$5.75 million.

Both figures included goods in transit, but Mr. Tourgeman said the value of transit goods was "very small" — meaning that the bulk of the goods entering the

territories of each other were destined for the local market.

Jordanian exports to Israel were mainly agricultural products, foodstuffs, mechanical equipment, chemicals and raw materials.

Israel exported to Jordan plants and saplings, mechanical equipment, agricultural products and raw materials.

According to the embassy statistics, 828 trucks entered Israel from Jordan through the Sheikh Hussein Bridge in the north and 538 through the Wadi Araba crossing in the south during 1996, while 1,078 trucks entered Jordan through the north and 35 through the southern point.

The statistics also showed that 120,000 Israelis visited Jordan in 1996 in addition to 194,000 non-Israeli tourists entering the Kingdom from Israel.

"In 1996, the Israeli consulate in Amman granted 23,734 visas to Israel," the embassy

said. "Also in the same year, the Israeli Ministry of Interior issued a similar number of visas to Jordanians," it added, without giving a specific number of Jordanians who actually visited Israel.

However, it said about 35,500 Jordanians used the Sheikh Hussein Bridge and the Wadi Araba crossing to enter Jordan during the year.

According to the statistics, 18,000 Arab Israelis used the King Hussein Bridge to transit through Jordan on their way to perform the Hajj, and 472,000 Arabs, including Jordanians with West Bank, Gaza or Arab Jerusalem identity cards, used the same bridge in addition to 78,900 tourists.

Israeli tourists are not permitted to use the King Hussein Bridge to enter Jordan.

Trade between the two countries began after the implementation of a related agreement in June 1996.

"We expect bilateral trade to be between \$50 million and \$100 million during 1997 — \$30 million to \$40 million of Israeli exports to Jordan and \$20 million to \$30 million in Jordanian exports to Israel," said Mr. Tourgeman.

According to the spokesman, Israel feels that the expected figures "do not actually reflect the full potential of trade with Jordan" and wants to "promote and encourage businesses from both sides to exchange visits and seek increased trade."

"We expect to see the easiness in the transport and customs procedures to reflect an increase in trade activities," said Mr. Tourgeman. He was referring to the new "door-to-door" arrange-

ment that replaced a "back-to-back" system on Jan. 1, 1997.

Under the new arrangement, Jordanian trucks carrying cargo for the Israeli market could cross into the Jewish state without cumbersome security and customs inspections as long as they are strictly checked and screened by Jordanian authorities.

Earlier, Jordanian trucks had to unload the cargo at the crossing point for inspections and the goods were reloaded onto Israeli trucks on the other side, thus causing delays and extra costs.

Mr. Tourgeman said the improving political relationship after a period of stagnation in 1996 "will also reflect positively on trade and economic cooperation between the two countries."

That was a reference to Jordan's criticism of the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose position deadlocked the implementation of autonomy agreements signed with the Palestinians by his predecessor government.

The deadlock was lifted in January when Jordan intervened and narrowed the differences, leading to Israel and the Palestinians signing an amended agreement on the implementation of the autonomy accords.

Mr. Netanyahu scheduled a visit to Jordan two weeks ago, but postponed it because of the death of 73 Israeli soldiers in an air collision in northern Israel. No new date has been set for the visit.

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## China, Israel sign customs agreement

TEL AVIV (AFP) — China and Israel signed a customs agreement Monday at the start of an official visit to the Jewish state by Chinese Vice Premier Li Langxing aimed at boosting bilateral trade, officials said.

Mr. Li and Foreign Minister David Levy signed the customs affairs pact "in the framework of expanding trade ties between the two countries," the foreign ministry said.

Officials said the agreement would boost cooperation in the battle against drug trafficking and other illegal trade and evasion of customs duties.

"This agreement is a sign of the remarkable opening of the Chinese economy," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Mr. Li was on the first full

day of a five-day visit to Israel at the head of a delegation including vice minister of trade and economic cooperation, Liu Shanzai, the director of China's General Administration of Customs, Qian Guanlin and assistant foreign minister, Ji Peiding.

"The purpose of this visit is to strengthen bilateral relations, especially economic and trade relations," Yehang Zhang, first secretary at China's embassy in Tel Aviv, said.

Mr. Li was also scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Ezer Weizman, Finance Minister Dan Meridor and Industry and Trade Minister Nathan Sharansky.

Wednesday, Mr. Li is due to participate in the inauguration of a new factory for

the ECI telecoms company which will export digital telecommunications equipment to China.

The Chinese delegation is also scheduled to hold talks with Israeli industrialists and visit the Dead Sea Works Mineral Extraction operation during their stay.

Israel and China established diplomatic relations in early 1992. Bilateral trade last year amounted to a relatively modest \$341 million.

\$159 million in Israeli imports of Chinese goods and \$82 million in exports to China, according to government figures.

Israel's main exports to China are machinery, chemical products and optical medical equipment. Imports include chemicals, machinery and textiles.

REUTERS

REUTERS

## The Business of Information

### Major Currencies & Cross Rates

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6390	0.6194	1.4810	124.37	1.3513	1675.42	1.9363	5.7256
DE Mark	0.6108	1.0000	0.3536	0.6563	63.76	0.7363	936.26	1.3760	3.4756
GB Sterling	1.6145	2.7458	1.0000	2.3450	201.02	1.2187	2704.97	3.0761	9.2400
JP Yen	0.0080	0.0130	0.0049	0.0151	1.0000	0.0074	103.73	1.6370	3.7564
CA Dollar	0.7400	1.2375	0.4973	1.1896	136.77	1.0000	1297.12	1.4835	4.2436
IT Lira	0.0006	0.0010	0.0004	0.0012	136.77	0.0008	1375.26	1.3666	3.3366
FR Franc	0.1747	0.2964	0.1080	0.2532	21.69	0.2357	33.23	33.2300	1.0000

### Energy

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	21.15	20.65
WTI	22.35	22.05
Bony	21.15	20.85
Dubai	18.52	18.00
UL Gas	205.00	204.00

### Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4533	0.16516	0.39516	33.1895
AE Dirham	0.3723	0.6286	0.16854	0.4035	33.8891
KW Dinar	3.2949	5.6024	2.04082	4.88281	410.172
BH Dinar	0.3770	0.6285	0.16854	0.4035	33.8891
CY Pound	1.8642	3.2372	1.2158	2.909	244.285

### Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	344	344.5
Silver (oz's)	5.2	5.22
Platinum (oz's)	363.5	364.5
Cu (3 Months)	2275	2280
Zinc (3 Months)	1218	1222
Lead (3 Months)	654	657
Ni (3 Months)	7760	7780

### Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period	1	3	6	12	Year
USD	5.37	5.56	5.68	5.65	5.75
GBP	6.12	6.43	6.56	6.62	6.72
JPY	0.25	0.32	0.50	0.54	0.55
DEM	3.10	3.08	3.04	3.00	3.00
FRF	3.20	3.21	3.25	3.20	3.25
CHF	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53
ITL	7.36	7.21	7.02	6.84	6.73

### Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lb)	175.75	Spot
Sugar (Shon)	307.5	Spot
Wheat (Shon)	133.5	Spot
Soya (c/lb)	22.17	Spot
Tea (c/lb)	117	Spot
Barley (c/lb)	2.2	Spot
Rice (Shon)	378	Spot

### JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
DE Mark	0.4174	0.4185
FR Franc	0.1237	0.1243
NL Guilder	0.3718	0.3737

\* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.



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## THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Aircraft engine cover
- La —
- Blind section
- Balliwick
- Buddhist king
- Othello's deceiver
- Not Greeley's advice
- Lineman
- Acas
- Chicago's airport
- Protein source
- Money-making outfit
- Uncanny intuition
- Beverage holder
- Diplomat Abba
- Botch
- Muckraker
- Tarboll
- Not Steinbeck's novel
- Conjunction
- Refreshment spots
- On a cruise
- Monochrome
- Boob tubes
- Yemen's port
- Paul and John
- Richard's veep
- Grazes
- Gin maker
- Not Flaherty's documentary
- Indigo
- Black (profitable)
- Large landmass
- Cat and canary
- Model
- Nobleman

by Frederick T. Buhler

EGOS ROSS REELER  
LAVE IGOT STOVE  
IRAD BLUE TULIP  
BLUEBERRYHILL  
ITO EEE  
BANANABOATSONG  
LIL SPA HEALER  
ONTAP TKO STERE  
TEAPOT ERS IVY  
STRAWBERRYWINE  
DAM NIN  
WATERMELONMAN  
VIGOR ERIN AJAR  
ATALE TINY TAPE  
SHRED SEEM EXAM

DOWN

- Zoo compartments
- Maine town
- Mistress for 31D
- Asian language
- Forty winks
- Gray
- Rogers et al.
- Boxing result
- de Cologne
- Attractions
- Asian monk
- Lab gel
- Pitch
- Some deer
- the above
- Flair
- Atomizes
- Lead-in to China
- More sage
- Ribs
- fix
- Darling dog
- Son of Isaac
- German city
- German car
- Subatomic particle
- Misfortune
- Rib
- Orient
- Sings
- Restraint
- Showy vessel
- Use the tub
- Rental contract
- Borden's cow
- Indian instrument
- Cookie
- Sheet
- Monogram part abbr.
- Immature salamanders
- Untanned hide
- Lannon's wife
- Literary monogram

JORDAN TIMES  
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684311-699634

## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Try to establish more harmony today among the members of your family. You can get fine results by entertaining at home later this evening with close friends and your loved ones, so make this one very festive.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Try to be open-minded in your communications today and you can get across your intentions. Stop thinking small, open your eyes to the new opportunities around you and thereby you can receive praise from a bigwig.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Revise your budget today so that you'll have extra money to spend on making your home more comfortable, however, don't be too extravagant or you won't have any funds for a rainy day or lean times.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Use your natural charm today to influence people you enjoy and would like to be around in the days ahead. Later this evening drive carefully while on the highway so that you don't get into a difficult situation.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) The amount of effort you expend today is proportionate to your position in the business world, so you can become quite successful if you put your energy into any career activities. Avoid a person who interferes with any tasks.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Some unusual aspects of a new enterprise can be cleared up easily today if you proceed with caution. Plan your itinerary if you'll be leaving on a short trip soon, so that there won't be any complications.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Extend yourself in the business world today and put a plan to work which will gain you more success and notoriety. Watch your credit situation, otherwise you could find yourself short on funds and deep in debt.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Don't put any new ideas into action today until you've smoothed off the rough edges and have a workable plan of action. Seek the advice of an expert who has a proven track record of successful business ventures.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) This can be a very profitable day today if you're sure to keep the promises you have made. Teamwork with your loved ones can help greatly so that you can be successful in whatever the project turns out to be.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) It would be wise to keep informed on current world events so that you can make a good impression upon those in authority. A good friend can introduce you to a person who has good advice for you, so keep your ears open.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Superiors may be studying your efforts, so do your best today and thereby gain recognition. Do nothing later this evening which could annoy your loved ones and cause a big disagreement to develop.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Listen to the suggestions of a new friend today who can help you improve your social life. Progressive thinking upon a part is a must at this time, so make your ideas come across to the fullest and gain recognition.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

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## European team begins visit to assess economic performance

By Ghaila Alul  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A European delegation arrived in Amman Monday on a three-day visit to assess Jordan's economic performance and the implementation of the

economic structural programme which was started in 1989. Yves Gazzo, head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Jordan, told the Jordan Times Monday that the delegation will discuss the mea-

sures Jordan is taking in its implementation of the structural reform programme before the European Union (EU) decides to disperse 40 million ECUs (European Currency Units) in support of the Kingdom's balance of payments.

The 40 million ECUs, Mr. Gazzo said, will be the second tranche of 100 million ECUs (about \$128 million) granted to the Kingdom in September.

He added that the first tranche of 60 million ECUs was released in October.

Harold Cool, desk officer for Jordan at the European Commission in Brussels praised Jordan's "extremely good" efforts in implementing the structural reform programme, but did not say when the EU will announce the release of the remaining 40 million ECUs.

Ministry of Planning Secretary General Nabil Amman expressed confidence that Jordan has met all the European requirements and expected the amount to be released before the end of May.

The EU had said in a statement following the announcement of the grant in September that the financial package which supports Jordan's "positive role" it has played in the peace process, aims to alleviate the external fiscal pressure on the Jordanian economy as well as pave the way for a fruitful association agreement between Jordan and the EU.

The grant is also geared towards a deficit free fiscal budget and zero deficit in external balance of payments by the year 1998 with measures implemented under supervision of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

The financial package comes from the MEDA programme, a new aid instrument adopted in 1996, and is based on the principles of the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995, launching a Euro-Mediterranean partnership and reinforcing financial and technical support from the EU to its Mediterranean partners.

The countries covered by MEDA are Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Malta, Turkey, the West Bank and Gaza.

## Jordan eyes France as most promising European market for tourism to Jordan

By Francesca Ciriaci  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Reflecting the high expectations surrounding the coming Jordanian Season in Paris, Jordan's tourism industry is turning to France as one of the most promising Western markets.

"In 1996, Jordan received more than 30,000 French tourists, making France the third most important European tourism market after the United Kingdom and Germany," Tourism and Antiquities Minister Saleh Irsheidat said Monday.

Speaking to 55 French tourism agents, participating in a 5-day promotional visit to Jordan, during a dinner held in their honour at the Inter Continental Hotel, the minister stressed that "tourism from France has the potential to increase further and cover a higher share of total arrivals from Europe."

Dr. Irsheidat pointed to the recent developments in the Kingdom's tourism sector and stated that "since the signing of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, the private sector has been showing unprecedented enthusiasm to invest in tourism."

He cited well renowned international hotel companies which are in the process of entering or have already entered the Jordanian market, such as Hyatt, Sheraton, Movenpick, Radisson-SAS and Accor.

"From the 9,000 rooms currently available, the number of hotel rooms in Jordan is expected to double by the end of this millennium," Dr. Irsheidat told the audience.

Private sector businessmen also look at the French market as a main target in their marketing strategies. "Eighty-five per cent of our customers are from Europe and the U.S., and French tourists account for a significant share of this percentage," said Suleiman Tarazi, market and development manager at Jordan Tourism Investment (JTI), a leading tourism operator and the owning company of Artizaman and the tourism resorts of Kan Zaman and Taybet Zaman.

In line with President Jacques Chirac's mediating role in the Middle East peace process, the French public opinion "sympathises with the Arabs and has developed a deep interest in visiting Arab countries," said Josiane Durand, director for the Near East and Europe at the Paris-based Voyageurs du

Monde tourism company. Ms. Durand, a member of the visiting delegation, said that tourism packages including Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Israel are very popular among French tourists.

In preparation for the Jordanian Season in Paris, to be inaugurated on March 10 and scheduled to include exhibitions featuring Jordanian historic and artistic heritage as well as a number of other cultural initiatives, representatives from leading French tourism companies were invited to visit Jordan's archaeological sites and tourism facilities.

Addressing the French participants and their Jordanian counterparts at a Jordanian-style dinner held on Sunday at Kan Zaman, Ministry of

Tourism Secretary General Akram Masarweh highlighted the potential of Jordan's tourism industry and called for increased cooperation between the Kingdom and France in the tourism sector.

The promotional initiative organised by the Ministry of Tourism, the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB), Royal Jordanian (RJ) and the Jordan Society of Tourism and Travel Agents (JSTTA) was seen by many participants as an example of "successful cooperation between the private and public sectors."

The five-day visit aims at "familiarising French tourism agents with Jordan's tourism facilities and archaeological and nature attractions," Mr. Tarazi told the Jordan Times.

will visit the archaeological sites at Madaba, Umm Qais, Jerash and Petra as well as the natural beauties of Wadi Rum and Aqaba. "They will also take the opportunity for having a first-hand look at Jordanian hotels and tourism facilities," Mr. Tarazi added.

Praising the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Tourism and the JTB, Taybet Zaman General Manager Osama Dabbas defined the Jordanian Season in Paris, to be held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor and Ms. Bernadette Chirac, as "part of a most needed marketing campaign."

Mr. Irsheidat added that, within the framework of the Jordanian Season in France, an advertising

campaign will be launched in the famous Paris Metro. Promotional material and brochures will be distributed to the public and contacts have already been made with the most influential French media.

Together with the coming Jordanian Season and the currently held promotional tour for tourism agents, the busy agenda of joint Jordanian-French activities in the tourism field includes a third initiative.

A three-day workshop focusing on tourism engineering and hotel equipment, held by French companies highly specialised in the international tourism sector will start in Amman on Feb. 22.

## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

### Government toughens rules for recruiting civil servants

\*\* UNDER NEW amendments to recruitment rules approved by the Council of Ministers' all persons who have registered at the Civil Service Commission (CSC) seeking government jobs will not be hired if they are already employed at universities, banks, municipalities and main companies (potash, phosphate, cement, Royal Jordanian and public shareholding electricity firms).

According to the Cabinet decision, those government workers classified in the fourth category will also be excluded from civil service posts.

CSC President Abdullah Olayyan explained that the decision was taken in light of past experience that showed job seekers appearing for interviews when called were half the number of nominees selected by the CSC as candidates for interviews. He said that more than 60 per cent of appointees have abstained from their jobs at the Ministry of Education and that a large percentage of those interviewed for appointments were found to be working at non-governmental public institutions, the private sector.

As such, he pointed out, the real percentage of unemployment and the number of government job seekers are questionable and unreliable. As a result, the CSC chief expected the number of applicants to civil service jobs in 1997 to drop by 30 per cent from the 1996 level. At any rate, Mr. Olayyan did not expect more than 5,000 new jobs to be filled in the civil service in this year's manning table. These jobs will be as follows: 1,000 technical and specialised posts at a specific number of government departments, 2,000 to replace retiring personnel and another 2,000 to replace staff on unpaid leaves or secondment (Al Dustour + Al Aswaq).

### Central Bank foreign currency reserves to reach \$800m in '97

\*\* THE CENTRAL Bank of Jordan (CBJ) is expected to receive about \$40 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) today (Tuesday). This will be the first tranche of the additional credit that the IMF has decided to extend to Jordan to support the Kingdom's foreign currency reserves and implement economic reforms.

According to CBJ Deputy Governor Michel Marto the new credits will boost Jordan's reserves by more than \$100 million above the 1996 level which has reached \$697.

Dr. Marto stressed that the CBJ has no intention whatsoever to reconsider the dinar/dollar link which is in force since 1995. He also denied that the volume of the trade protocol with Iraq will affect the reserves of the CBJ noting that a technical committee from the CBJ and the Iraqi central bank has recently agreed on a mechanism to implement the protocol for this year (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

### THE BETTER HALF.



"It's one of those flavored coffees. It's supposed to taste like you're kissing Tom Cruise."

### JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

AXMMI  
NARBD  
PERMAC  
RETHOX

Print answer here: \_\_\_\_\_

Yesterday's Jumbles: MEALY ENTRY JABBER THIRTY  
Answer: What the landscaper's remarks were - EARTHY

## JORDAN MARKETPLACE \*\*\* JORDAN MARKETPLACE \*\*\* JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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# Barcelona win eases Robson's demise

## Juventus lead Serie A as Bayern return to top

PARIS (AFP) — Bobby Robson strengthened his hand as manager of Spanish First Division giants Barcelona on Sunday when he earned the backing of club vice-president Johan Gaspard after his side beat Racing Santander 1-0 at the Nou Camp.

The win left Barcelona six points behind league leaders and bitter rivals Real Madrid who could manage only a 2-2 draw at home to Betis on Saturday.

After the match, the former England manager pleaded with reporters to help him win over fans who have been largely hostile since he replaced Dutch legend Johan Cruyff last summer.

Robson had made it clear before the Santander match that he would honour his two-year contract regardless of media reports that he was finished at Barcelona.

Athletic Bilbao moved up to eighth after a 3-2 win against Oviedo — Ismael Urzaiz blasting home a hat-trick.

In Italy, European and world champions Juventus needed two goals from Alessandro Del Piero to overcome Perugia 2-1 and stay five points clear of the chasing pack.

Del Piero scored his first goal from the penalty spot after 37 minutes after Perugia keeper Luca Bucci fouled Christian Vieri, and he then smashed home a spectacular half-volley in first-half injury time.

Juve's title hopes received a boost when second-placed Sampdoria, unbeaten in seven matches, crashed 2-1 at home to AS Roma.

Francesco Moriero and Abel Balbo scored for Roma before Vincenzo Montella pulled one back for Sampdoria who badly missed suspended striker Roberto Mancini.

Despite finishing with ten



Milan's Montenegrin striker Dejan Savicevic (R) fight for the ball with Bologna's Oscar Mangoni during their Italian Serie A soccer match in Milan. Milan won the match 2-0 (Reuters photo)

men, AC Milan scored a 2-0 home victory over third-placed Bologna. A Demetrio Albertini penalty was followed by a goal from Jesper Blomqvist following some George Weah magic. Alas, Blomqvist blotted his copybook when he was sent off in the second-half.

Oliver Bierhoff, Germany's

Championship hero, came back from an injury absence to score in Udinese's 1-0 win over Cagliari.

And Chile's Ivan Zamorano and Frenchman

Youri Djorkaeff both scored for Inter Milan who earned a 2-2 draw at Lazio.

In France, league leaders Monaco stayed seven points clear after hammering Le

however, when a linesman was stretched off after being struck on the head by a bottle thrown by a spectator.

Bastia did not play but stayed third — their match at Caen being postponed because of flooding. And Bordeaux went sixth after forcing a 2-2 draw at Guingamp.

Strasbourg could thank two more goals from David Zinelli, who has so far scored 16 this season, for a 3-1 victory over Nice, while Marseille roared back after conceding an early goal to beat visiting Lille 5-1.

Marc Libbra and Xavier Gravelaine were both on target twice while Olivier Echouafni scored the fifth Marseille goal.

In Germany Jürgen Klinsmann scored twice to put Bayern Munich back on top of the Bundesliga. Bayern, who notched up a 3-0 home win against Sankt Pauli, had been temporarily displaced by Dortmund 24 hours earlier when the reigning champions produced an impressive 3-1 home triumph over Bayer Leverkusen.

Brazilian Mario Jardel scored a hat-trick to help 10-man Porto to a 4-2 away win over Chaves. It kept the champions 16-points clear on top of the Portuguese first division.

Second-placed Sporting beat Rio Ave 2-0 at home, while Benfica, a further point behind, beat Setubal away by the same margin.

Jardel, top-scorer in his first season in the Portuguese League, laid on the first goal for defender Joao Manuel Pinto. Chaves goalkeeper Rui Vasco failed to hold a header from the striker and Pinto headed home. Porto were reduced to 10 men before half-time when defender Sergio Conceicao was sent off for a second bookable offence.

That match was marred,

# Alba Berlin thrill city

## starved for winner

BERLIN (R) — Taxes are up, jobs are scarce, traffic is getting worse, the city is broke, and it's been a long lousy winter.

Berliners love to complain. But even if the German capital still doesn't have the government, or even a first division soccer team, the once-divided city of 3.5 million is enjoying a passionate love affair with its first-rate basketball team, Alba Berlin.

Not only have Berlin annihilated the competition in the German basketball Bundesliga this year, running up a Chicago Bulls-style unbeaten record of 23-0 with just three regular season games left before the playoffs start.

They also now head into the final 16 of the Euroleague Championships, having defeated some of the best clubs outside the United States along the way such as CSKA Moscow and Greece's Olympiakos Piraeus.

But what is probably the Alba Berlin's most impressive accomplishment of all is how they have captured the imagination of a city not known previously for its interest in basketball.

In a country where soccer is the undisputed king of the sports pages and sports broadcasts, Alba have become the dominant story, easily eclipsing the mediocre second-division Hertha Berlin soccer team.

Alba have given a city starved for success what it has so long craved — a winner.

"Soccer has a special status in Germany, but Berlin is a city that only wants winners," said Alba's coach Svetislav Pesic in an interview. "The city is like London or New York — it only wants the best, whether it is theatre or the cinema or whatever."

Alba's play-off clinching Euroleague win against CSKA Moscow last week before another sell-out crowd of 9,000 at the Max Schelling arena drew massive local media attention. It was a thrilling last-second 78-76 victory that landed on every front page and led local radio and television news broadcasts.

"The game was completely sold out three weeks in advance and we could easily have sold many, many more tickets than the 9,000," said Marco Baldi, Alba's general manager. "I wish we had more seats."

It is a lament rarely heard in a country where before this year a basketball crowd of 2,500 was considered a sensation.

All of Alba's Euroleague matches and most Bundesliga games were sold out this year, packed to the rafters with fren-

zied — yet well-behaved — crowds.

The new Schelling arena in the Prenzlauer Berg section of Eastern Berlin is more than double the size of Alba's previous home court in western Berlin and twice as pleasant as any other arena in Germany.

"The whole idea with the big new gym and the improvements with the team was so we could get up there with the big teams in Europe," said Wendell Acxis, a sharp-shooting American forward who joined Alba this year after 11 years experience in Spain, Italy and Israel.

Once a Yugoslav national coach, Pesic has been building up Alba over the last several years after guiding Germany to the European Championship. But prior to this year, the team finished second behind perennial powerhouse Bayer Leverkusen, losing in the finals for the last five consecutive years.

Although Berlin already had a strong team, after last season Pesic lured away two Bayer stars, German nationals Henning Harnisch and Sascha Hupmann. Both have fit in well with the nucleus of talented and altruistic players Pesic had been nurturing for years.

"The core group of players have been together in Berlin with me for several years," said Pesic. "They know each other's game well. We have had the continuity that other teams in the Bundesliga haven't had this year."

"I wanted to play in Berlin," said Harnisch, a silky 28-year-old who Berlin obtained from Leverkusen for a 400,000 marks (\$237,000) transfer fee. "Everyone fits in well here. There are no ego problems. We all have team goals. Before coming to Berlin, I had seen a lot of positive things develop here and I wanted to be part of it. I think there is quite a bit of potential."

Berlin were expected to improve with the new additions, but not even the die-hard perfectionist Pesic dreamed his team would go undefeated against the rest of the German league and advance so far in the Euroleague.

"We've won a lot of close games this year," said Henrik Roedel, an excellent passer and Alba's most tenacious defender who was a key player on North Carolina college teams in the early 1990s. "We've had a couple games in overtime and we won them all. We've had quite a bit of good fortune."

And that is exactly what Berlin needed.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Wang Junxia forced to stop training

BEIJING (R) — China's Olympic 5,000 metres champion Wang Junxia has been forced to stop training after contracting a nervous disorder, the China Sports daily said on Monday. In an interview, Wang said she was suffering from neurasthenia, a nervous condition causing fatigue and anxiety, due to her rigorous training. But she vowed to continue running, saying: "As long as my body permits, I will continue to run. It is a pity for me to stop training but now it will take some time to cure my illness first." Wang, who rocketed to international prominence in 1993 when she shattered the world records for the 3,000 and 10,000 metres, said she now weighed 98 kg, 10kg more than in Atlanta.

### FINA backs Smith

LAUSANNE (AFP) — International Swimming Federation (FINA) Director Cornel Marculescu denied on Monday that Irish Olympic swimming hero Michelle Smith was one step from being banned. "She has not violated any rules yet. We have good cooperation with her," he told AFP after reports in the Times of London that FINA had warned the Irish Amateur Swimming Association that Smith was one infringement away from possible sanction. The paper said Smith had failed to make herself available for a random test last year but Marculescu said the swimmer had given them a satisfactory explanation. "It was a problem of one day because of travel arrangements from the U.S.," he said. However, he agreed that another infringement could lead to FINA investigating. "Yes, the sanction is a four year ban for failing to submit to unannounced testing but first we have to investigate if there is another no show," he insisted. He said Smith had been tested outside competition in the past. Smith, who won three Olympic titles and a bronze medal in last year's Olympics, faced a hostile American press, keen to substantiate drugs allegations, in Atlanta.

### Perec faces new barrier

PARIS (AFP) — Double Olympic champion Marie-Jose Perec says she will double up again at the world championships in Athens in August — but this time over the fences. "We've looked at the timetable and we think I can attempt both the 400m and 400m hurdles and I believe the world record for the latter event is within my possibilities," said the Frenchwoman who won the 200m and 400m in Atlanta.

### McColgan defends London title

LONDON (AFP) — Liz McColgan will defend her London marathon title on April 13 against New York winner Anuta Catana of Romania and world half-marathon champion Ren Xiujuan from China.

### Sporting sign teenager

LISBON (AFP) — Sporting, second in the Portuguese first division, are to sign 19-year-old Paraguayan Cesar Ramirez, leading scorer in last week's South American under 20 championship, from Asuncion Club Cerro Cora.

## Muster ousts Ivanisevic in Dubai

DUBAI (R) — Austria's Thomas Muster toppled defending champion and number one seed Goran Ivanisevic 7-5 7-6 (7-3) to capture the \$1 million Dubai Tennis Open Sunday.

Muster, ranked three in the world, lived dangerously in the first set but paved the way to victory with some superb returns of service which not only clinched some major points but frustrated Ivanisevic to distraction.

"I had a great week. I felt like fully charged batteries which never run down," said Muster, who will take home \$142,000 for winning the event on his fifth attempt.

"Everything about my game has improved, every day, every minute. But this doesn't mean that I will win all my matches, especially on clay this season."

Ivanisevic, who has one

of the biggest services in the game, blasted 21 aces past Muster but, on this occasion, that simply was not enough. The Croat controlled play early in the first set but Muster survived two break points in the second game before earning the vital break in the 11th game.

Frustrated by Muster's comeback, Ivanisevic hurled his racket in the air, collecting his second point penalty of the tournament, before the Austrian served out for the set.

In the second set, the Croat squandered a break point in the eighth game and then had three more chances to level the match on his serve when he led 6-5.

But the Austrian produced some lethal returns which left his opponent shaking his head in disbelief and after saving another two points, he forced the match into a tie-break which he

took 7-3.

"I had too many chances but each time Muster came out with amazing rallies. I did serve very well, the best in the tournament but what's the use when you can't cash in on the chances," said the dejected Croat.

"Thomas is one player you can't afford to miss chances (against). I did and paid the penalty. Certainly it was my best match in the tournament but, again, what can you do when your opponent is so good?" he added.

Muster, however, bled out some hope for Ivanisevic's year.

"He has all the ingredients to be the number one in the world, there is no question about that," he said.

"He is a great player and I am sure he will win Wimbledon this year."



Thomas Muster of Austria holds the winners trophy after he won the \$1 million Dubai Open (Reuters photo)

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Jewish settler Yosef Almalaikh (second right) chats with a Palestinian friend while shopping in Hebron's Arab produce market under the armed guard of an Israeli soldier on Monday. Mr. Almalaikh, who says he has been shopping from Palestinians for 25 years and who is only allowed to enter the market accompanied by Israeli soldiers, says he has no plans to change his habits since 80 per cent of the town was handed over to Palestinian self-rule one month ago (Reuters photo)

## Lebanon truce panel meets over complaints

NAQOURA (Agencies) — The five-nation committee monitoring a ceasefire accord in South Lebanon met Monday to discuss complaints from both Lebanon and Israel, sources close to the Lebanese delegation said.

The panel — made up of France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the United States — met at the U.N. peacekeeping force headquarters in the town of Naqoura near the Israeli border.

Lebanon protested last week after a string of Israeli air raids over southern and eastern Lebanon.

A government official said the protest cited the wounding of a shepherd and the damaging of homes in Nahle, near the eastern town of Baalbek in the Bekaa Valley.

Israel lodged its complaint after the discovery on Feb. 7 of five bombs it says were planted in its self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon by guerrillas of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah.

Under the terms of the ceasefire accord ending an Israeli 17-day offensive against Hizbollah in south Lebanon last April, both sides are banned from targeting civilians in their on-going conflict.

The committee last met on Jan. 10 when it ruled that a Katyusha rocket attack on northern Israel from South Lebanon, which no group claimed, was a violation of the accord.

The panel has already met 10 times to hear

complaints from the two countries. Although it cannot impose sanctions, the committee aims to contain fighting and prevent an escalation.

In Damascus Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on Monday received Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, who arrived here from Paris the previous day, an official said.

Mr. Hariri met Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa on Sunday night and briefed them on his talks in Paris on the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The Lebanese leader said Tuesday in Paris that French President Jacques Chirac, a long-time friend, assured him of his support for "a comprehensive agreement based on the principle of trading land for peace."

Mr. Hariri also spoke in Paris with Defense Minister Charles Millon, who visited Israel last week and offered his country's assistance in helping the Jewish state reach a peace agreement with Syria and Lebanon.

However, Mr. Chirac told Mr. Hariri that France would not send troops to south Lebanon if Israel unilaterally withdrew its troops from the buffer zone it occupies there. Israel occupies an 850-square-kilometre to prevent attacks on the northern part of the Jewish state.

Syria is the main power-broker in Lebanon where it has 35,000 troops.

## Secret Israeli facility fuels fear

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli lawmakers will debate the future of a top-secret biological institute on Tuesday amid foreign reports it makes weapons and conducts research that residents fear pose a danger.

"I am afraid there may be (research)...that can cause damage to the people...and I want to be sure that they will explain this," Labour Party legislator Rafi Elul told Reuters on Monday.

Israel has declined comment over the years on news reports in France and elsewhere that the biological institute in Nes Ziona, a town of 25,000 south of Tel Aviv, was working on biological and chemical weapons.

Israeli officials have accused Arab countries hostile to the Jewish state of making such weapons.

Mr. Elul is vice-chairman of a special parliamentary committee for scientific research, which, he said, would invite representatives of the institute and the defence, environment and health ministries to testify on Tuesday.

Asked if he knew whether chemical or biological weapons were made at the heavily guarded plant, Mr. Elul, a former mayor of the nearby Mezkeret Barya community, said: "I don't know but there are rumours that maybe."

He said growth of Nes Ziona had brought the problem closer to home.

"When it was established 40 years ago the citizens were very far from this place. But now the citizens are living very, very near," he said, recommending that any potentially harmful research be moved to a remote location.

Nes Ziona's Mayor Yossi Shvo said he wanted the institute kicked out of town after revived reports in France of arms production three years ago. "The biological institute must be moved," he told Reuters on Monday.

The plant, hidden behind high walls in an industrial area, has long been shrouded in secrecy.

The former deputy head of the Nes Ziona plant, 79-year-old Marcus Klingberg, was sentenced to 20 years in jail in 1983 for spying for the former Soviet Union. Censors banned news of the affair until a decade after he was jailed.

An Israeli police spokeswoman said on Monday that a Tel Aviv judge would rule on Tuesday whether to free Mr. Klingberg, said to be in poor health.

Mr. Elul said a parliamentary subcommittee could investigate the plant if secrecy had to be maintained.

## Sudan: Priority is ouster of Ethiopian 'aggressors'

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The Sudanese government said Monday that its top priority was to drive out "aggressors" from Ethiopia and Eritrea, before envisaging mediation with rebel forces.

Information Minister Al Tayeb Ibrahim Mohammad Khair stated that the "expulsion of the Ethiopian-Eritrean aggression was irrevocable," according to the official daily Al Sudan Al Hadith.

The government has announced that preparations have been made for a counter-offensive to retake Kurmuk, Qessan and other parts of southeastern Sudan which have been occupied by anti-government forces since Jan. 12. The military junta in Khartoum accuses Ethiopia of invading this area.

Regarding mediation with southern Sudanese rebels, Mr. Khair said "everything is to be set aside until after liberation of the land and its cleansing from agents and intruders, and after Sudanese justice has said its word about the brutal and inhumane acts committed by the enemies of the religious faith and the nation."

Mr. Khair said a final peace agreement would be concluded with rebel factions which signed a political charter in April last year, without waiting for Colonel John Garang, leader of the mainstream rebel Sudan

People's Liberation Army (SPLA), to join in.

"John Garang has relinquished the south Sudan question and has placed himself in the arena of the scramble for power along with the agents (exiled members of the political opposition to the junta) in Asmara and Addis Ababa," the Eritrean and Ethiopian capitals, the spokesman said.

The SPLA has been fighting since 1983 to free mainly animist and Christian southern Sudan from domination by the Islamic north, but Col. Garang's movement has been weakened by the emergence of splinter groups.

In the statement published by Al Sudan Al Hadith, Mr. Khair also said that Zairean refugees had recently crossed the border into Sudan's West Equatoria province, fleeing fighting in eastern Zaire.

The spokesman expressed his government's concern with the effects of the civil war in Zaire and "the inhumane catastrophe caused by displacement."

He did not disclose how many Zaireans had crossed on to Sudanese territory, but called on the U.N. high Commissioner for Refugees to offer immediate aid to them.

The local press also reported that government ministers met Sunday to discuss a

diplomatic offensive to explain to foreign nations "the scale of the Ethiopian-Eritrean aggression against Sudan."

Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha was quoted by the papers as saying that a high-level delegation would tour African countries.

The country's national assembly (parliament), meanwhile, decided to send delegations on African, Asian and European tours conveying messages from speaker Hassan Al Tourabi to his counterpart abroad.

Al Engaz Al Watani reported Monday that one such team had already left for New Delhi to participate in an inter-parliamentary conference. The delegation took messages from Mr. Tourabi to the speakers of the Indian houses of representatives and senate briefing them on the Ethiopian aggression on the eastern front, the paper said.

In a separate development, the official Sudan news agency SUNA announced Monday that President Omar Al Beshir will next week pay a state visit to south Africa to brief his counterpart Nelson Mandela on recent developments in east Sudan.

General Beshir would also discuss prospects for further developing relations between Sudan and South Africa, the agency said.

## DFLP to launch Gaza newspaper and announce 'new programme'

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has authorised the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) to open a newspaper in the Palestinian territories, officials from the group said Monday.

Al Massar will begin publishing next month as the official mouthpiece of the Damascus-based faction, which is opposed to peace agreements signed with Israel, said Saleh Zaidan, a DFLP politburo member.

In preparation for publication, the DFLP opened a media office in Gaza City on Monday, Mr. Zaidan said.

Officials said the DFLP move was linked to a decision Sunday by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to launch a "national dialogue" aimed at reconciling the various rival Palestinian movements, including fundamentalist groups.

Mr. Zaidan said the DFLP welcomed Mr. Arafat's overture and would respond

Friday by announcing "a new political programme" for the group headed by Nayef Hawatmeh.

The DFLP and the bigger Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) led by George Habash strongly oppose the Oslo peace accords granting Palestinians partial autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for a five-year interim period pending negotiation on a permanent peace settlement. The final status talks are due to begin next month.

"We are against the Oslo process, but now that we have arrived at the final status negotiations, it is time for a new political initiative," Mr. Zaidan told AFP.

He would not elaborate on the new initiative, which, he said, would be unveiled during celebrations here Friday of the DFLP's 28th anniversary.

Unlike the PFLP, which has claimed responsibility for a series of deadly anti-Israeli attacks since the

launch of autonomy in 1994, the DFLP has kept its opposition activities largely political.

Last week the PNA granted permission to the Islamic Salvation Party, launched last year by senior figures in the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), to publish a weekly newspaper.

Hamas' own newspaper, Al Istiqlal, was closed a year ago by the authorities after the group carried out a string of suicide bombings in Israel.

Following a meeting of Mr. Arafat's cabinet on Sunday, the PNA announced a special committee for Palestinian national dialogue would hold its first meeting Feb. 26 in the West Bank city of Nablus.

"We invite all parties, both nationalist and Islamic, to the first meeting of the committee for national dialogue," said PNA Secretary-General Tayeb Abdul Rahim.

## Cairo court to try Israeli and Egyptian for spying

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt formally charged an Israeli and an Egyptian with espionage Monday and said the two will face trial.

Prosecutor General Ragaa Al Araby said the Israeli, Azam Azam, gave Emad Abdul Hamid Ismail female underwear soaked in invisible ink to be used for sending secret messages back to Israel.

Israeli officials have insisted that Azam is innocent.

Al Araby also said two Israeli women — Yousef Jreis and Mona Ahmad Shawahna — will be tried in absentia for recruiting the Egyptian. No date has been set for the trial.

Azam and Emad are under detention in Egypt.

Ismail reportedly told police that between March and October the two Israeli women gave him \$650 for supplying them with information on Egypt. They also promised to pay him \$1,000 a month for future information he provided.

The indictment said Azam confessed to taking underwear soaked in invisible ink from the Israeli agents and giving it to Ismail.

Egyptian media reports said Azam, who worked as an engineer in a textile company near Cairo, initially confessed to the charges but now maintains his innocence.

In 1979, Egypt became the first Arab state to make peace with Israel but relations between the two neighbours have remained cool.

The two men could face the death penalty if convicted of espionage, although it is usually only handed down if Egypt is at war with the country that recruited the spies.

Azam was arrested on Nov. 6. In remand for almost 100 days, he has been held at Torab jail on the outskirts of Cairo.

Azam, a father of four from Galilee in northern Israel, was arrested four days after the arrest of Ismail, who worked for the same textile company.

The Israeli-Arab women are currently in Israel. They have denied any involvement.

Ismail embassy spokesman Lior Ben Dor said Azam was still expect-

ed to be released soon. "As our prime minister, defence minister and chief diplomat have all been saying, he is not a spy," the spokesman said.

Sami Azam, brother of the accused, also came to the defence of the accused.

"We, the Druze, are Muslim Arabs who love Egypt as if it were our second home, and nothing could incite my brother to take part in acts of espionage against this country," he said.

"He only came to make a living. I'm sure he'll be released in the end," said Azam shortly before the decision for his brother to go on trial.

It was Ismail who alerted the authorities of the alleged Israeli network.

"The information passed on about the Egyptian economy was not really secret, but the fact of the matter is that he agreed to cooperate with Israeli agents," according to the charge sheet.

As many as 20 Israeli spy networks have been dismantled since Egypt signed peace with the Jewish state in 1979.

## COLUMN

### Swedish royal palace guard fires on colleagues

STOCKHOLM (R) — A Swedish soldier fired on his colleagues outside Stockholm's royal palace and wounded two soldiers with the same bullet, police said. The shooting occurred moments before the changing of the palace guard, a ceremony usually popular with tourists, but freezing temperatures meant that only a few people were present. Witnesses said they saw the soldier aim his A5 automatic rifle from the palace down over ramparts towards a group of soldiers approaching for the ceremony. A police spokesman said the soldier had been arrested and neither of the two injured men — an army captain and a national service soldier — had suffered life-threatening injuries. The captain was hit in the buttock by the bullet, which passed through his body and hit the other soldier standing nearby in the foot.

### Killer freed to attend opera he wrote in jail

EDINBURGH (R) — A man serving a life sentence for raping and murdering his girl friend on a Valentine's Day date is being freed to attend the premiere of an opera he wrote in jail. David Price wrote "Odyssey" in Edinburgh's Saughton prison after being convicted of killing Michelle Slater with a sledgehammer from a broken picture of his estranged wife in 1984. Prison service officials said Price, 34, would be accompanied by warders for the premiere on Tuesday at the demarcated European Arts Centre. He would not be handcuffed and would be free to mix with cast and audience. Price will also be allowed to attend the final performance on Wednesday. Many of the 50-strong Odyssey cast are music students and the orchestra is from Edinburgh University.

### French homeless occupy train station

PARIS (R) — Several hundred homeless people and charity workers occupied the main hall of the St Lazare railway station in central Paris demanding that French authorities requisition empty flats for the homeless. Witnesses said the demonstrators laid out sleeping bags in the hall while others took over a train, preventing it from leaving. Police brought up reinforcements but took no immediate action against the demonstrators.

### Looters rob sunken galleons off Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (R) — Looters are robbing treasure from Spanish galleons that sank off the coast of Honduras centuries ago. Culture Minister Rodolfo Pastor said. "We've seen the treasures of these galleons looted because we don't have the capacity to install navy watches in the 20 or 25 places where galleons exist," he said. "They have been looted for several years and they will continue to be looted because we don't have the patrol boats to prevent this from happening." The galleons, which sank off Honduras' Atlantic Coast in the 1500s, were carrying treasure back to Spain. Pastor told reporters. He estimated they contain about \$3 billion worth.

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## Israel roads

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directly linked to the...  
by Rafik Hariri. Offi...  
were being held.

Two of the suspect...  
Syrian controlled Be...  
Lebanon in the w...  
and another in Bar El...  
border with Syria. Th...  
They were taken fr...  
to Palestinian, the...  
that the other three s...  
in Beirut.

They are now in...  
Lebanese government...  
their identity. Japan...  
Yukiko Koda told...  
Tokyo.